

On Patrol

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NEWS FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL

MTC, CHP, Caltrans Launch 511 Freeway Aid

A Callbox in Your Cell Phone

by Adrian Fine, MTC SAFE

You might have seen some billboards or heard radio ads for a new motorist aid program. Called 511 Freeway Aid, the service connects motorists on the road to the Freeway Service Patrol and other roadside assistance services.

Using cell phones and the 511 phone system, motorists on a freeway with a non-emergency situation (flat tire, car stalled, out of gas, etc.) can dial 511 on their cell phones and say "Freeway Aid". The call will be transferred to the same center that answers yellow roadside call boxes. The location of the motorist will be determined and the appropriate roadside assistance services will be provided.

By responding rapidly to motorists in need with services like the FSP, Caltrans Bridge Tow, Rotational Tow or CHP response, 511 Freeway Aid is intended to decrease traffic congestion and non-emergency phone calls to 911 while increasing motorist safety. All in all, 511 Freeway Aid creates a useful link between the FSP program and motorists out on the road, enabling motorists to get help when they need it the most.



Adrian Fine

New Motorist Aid Program Manager

All of us in the FSP program wish good luck to Joanna Fox, who is leaving the Motorist Aid program coordinator position. Moving to another section of MTC, Joanna will be taking over the Bay Area Video Upgrade (BAVU) program, a system of highway cameras used in incident and congestion management.



Joanna Fox

Replacing Joanna is Adrian Fine, who some of you might remember as an MTC SAFE intern. Adrian comes to MTC from the University of Washington, where he studied geography. As the Motorist Aid program coordinator, Adrian will work on a range of FSP issues, including invoicing, fleet management and contractor communication. Adrian also

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Colorful billboard at I-880/980 interchange in Oakland promotes 511 freeway aid

coordinates the 511 Freeway Aid program, which launched this September.

15th Annual Awards Event in Tilden Park – BBQ, Raffle and Ceremony

The 15th annual FSP awards event took place this year in Berkeley's Tilden Park Padre Picnic area. Over 150 FSP drivers, their families, MTC, CHP and Caltrans staff participated in the festivities, which began with a relay race and games of horseshoes.

Drivers, owners, families and staff all enjoyed the once-a-year chance to socialize, talk shop, or show support for the award winners and everyone else who works diligently to keep FSP running. Soon enough began the Awards Ceremony, which formally recognized the accomplishments of FSP program participants. Three-year, five-year,

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Awards

(continued from page 1)

ten-year and our first fifteen-year **Service Awards** were distributed to those drivers who have been certified for the above number of years. The FSP partners were proud to recognize those 25 dedicated drivers who have been involved with the program for multiple years.

After the service-year awards, **Contractor's Choice Awards** were presented to an FSP driver or administrative staff member from each contractor, selected by the contractor for their exemplary contributions to the FSP program.

FSP drivers showed their support for CHP Dispatcher Nicole Camigi, who was voted by the drivers as the **Dispatcher of the Year**. Without dispatch, FSP would go nowhere fast. Congratulations, Nicole!

The **Golden Paperclip Award** was given to Yarbrough Bros. Towing for their exceptionally low rate of paperwork errors – only one error in the past year! This award is very important to the FSP partners because clean data makes it easier to monitor and assess program efficiency.

The **Public Choice Award** is given to an FSP driver who displays special empathy for motorists while also providing quality service. Ray Nelson of Palace Garage was that driver – the public sent in many appreciative emails thanking Ray for his help and friendliness, along with a few written letters.

B&D Towing of Concord, a contractor since 1999, received the **Contractor of the Year** award. During 2007-2008, B&D set the standard for the FSP program with prompt, courteous and efficient roadside services, while also maintaining excellent working relationships with program staff. Congratulations to all of the drivers and staff from B&D!

Three **Special Recognition Awards** were presented to Benjamin Schley, David Ruiz and Richard Mur-

ray of Matos Towing & Transport for their courageous actions in an emergency freeway incident. Their quick wits, training, and discipline helped CHP to locate and detain a dangerous criminal.



Robert Bettencourt, Sr.

Finally, the **Driver of the Year Award** for 2007-2008 was presented to Campbell's Towing driver Robert Bettencourt, Sr. Robert receives much praise from his fellow drivers, CHP partners and the public. The quality and quantity of his work with FSP is hard to match. During the year, Robert chalked up 1,670 assists, a 13 percent survey return rating, 99 percent accuracy on his paperwork, and still managed to keep that huge smile on his face!

The Awards Ceremony was quickly followed by the drivers' favorite event – the prize raffle. Jackie Parashis of Bill's Towing organized the raffle this year.

After the Awards Event, participants mingled and helped to clean up the picnic area. All were happy to have celebrated another successful year with FSP. We would like to thank all the FSP drivers, contractors, families and friends, CHP, Caltrans and MTC staff for making the FSP program, and this party, such a success. Hope to see you all next year!

Upcoming Events

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings

8:30 a.m. at MTC, MetroCenter
October 16, 2008 (CHP, GGD)
November 10, 2008
December 9, 2008
January 13, 2009
February 10, 2009
March 10, 2009
April 14, 2009

Tow Contractors Meetings

11 a.m. Tuesdays at MTC, MetroCenter
November 4, 2008
January 13, 2009
March 10, 2009

Quarterly Driver Refresher Training

11 a.m. at CHP, Dublin*
December 18, 2008
11 a.m. at CHP, GGD
December 12, 2008
11 a.m. at MTC, Oakland
December 11, 2008
December 19, 2008

Proficiency Testing

7 a.m. at CHP, GGD
November 3, 2008

Certification Class

7 a.m. at CHP, GGD
November 12-14, 2008

* Tentative Date

First Quarter 2008 Statistical Summary (January – March 2008)

Total number of assists = 31,612
Percentage of assists involving people = 52.44 percent
Average number of assists per hour per truck = 0.81 (urban beats) & 0.66 (rural beats)
Percentage of motorist survey returns = 15.2 percent
Percentage of surveys rating service as excellent = 95.8 percent
Average motorist wait time = 9.2 minutes

Second Quarter 2008 Statistical Summary (April – June 2008)

Total number of assists = 37,872
Percentage of assists involving people = 51.33 percent
Average number of assists per hour per truck = 0.94 (urban beats) & 0.77 (rural beats)
Percentage of motorist survey returns = 12.9 percent
Percentage of surveys rating service as excellent = 96.26 percent
Average motorist wait time = 9.2 minutes

Quarterly Awards First Quarter, January – March 2008

by Adrian Fine, MTC SAFE

Driver of the Quarter

Robert Bodeau has been certified with the FSP program since 2005, when Vacaville Tow became the contractor for Beats 34 and



Robert Bodeau

37 in Solano County. Robert, who patrols Beat 34, receives much praise, both from his employer and the public. Vacaville's FSP manager, Paul Henderson, says of Robert: "He is very attentive to details, and I know that he likes to help out the CHP officers and the motoring public. He has always been willing to help out extra around the shop. Just a really great employee."

Beat of the Quarter

Beat 29 covers 14 miles of Interstate 80 in Solano County, between Magazine Street in Vallejo and Abernathy Road in Fairfield. Roadrunner Tow does a commendable job of providing important motorist-aid services to this stretch of freeway. Manager Karl Offerman says, "With the state of Interstate 80 through Solano County, we've always had lots of tire issues, and it's important for the FSP guys to take care of it. There are also no shoulders, so it's imperative that we're out there." Beat 29's assist rate of 1.41 assists per hour per truck was the second highest in the program for this period, and it was complemented by a quick response time of 9.1 minutes.

Contractor of the Quarter

In the first quarter of 2008, **B&D Towing's** FSP service exemplified the goals of the program. Driving a total of 34,000 miles on Beat 25, B&D committed no violations in this period,



Roadrunner Tow's Beat 29 drivers (left to right): Karl Offerman, Jeremy Hemingway, Mike Sagami, John Heller and Dennis Birosel

and achieved a very low motorist wait time of only 7.6 minutes. Furthermore, as a tow representative to the Technical Advisory Committee, B&D's owner, Richard Valles, contributes valuable insight from the tow contractors to the three agency partners which coordinate the FSP program.



B&D Towing's Richard & Karen Valles

Quarterly Awards Second Quarter, April – June 2008

by Adrian Fine, MTC SAFE

Driver of the Quarter

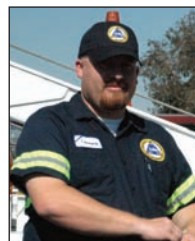
Gerardo Menendez was selected for Driver of the Quarter due to his quality service, friendly demeanor and excellent cooperation with different FSP partners. A certified driver since 1999, Gerardo is described by Rich Bilafer, B&A owner, as "one of the more dedicated people FSP has. He is on top of his stuff in making sure he is there when, or before, a call happens." Gerardo patrols Beat 11 in San Francisco, along I-80 and I-280 and Highway 101. This is one of the busiest FSP corridors, and it is a great thing that Gerardo patrols it!



Gerardo Menendez

deserves special recognition since the beat exceeded all stated goals for the program. This includes a motorist wait time of less than 10 minutes; an assist per hour per truck rate higher than 0.75 (rural) or 1.0 (urban); a driver to truck ratio above 1.75; zero violations or late data submittals; and a survey return rating of higher than 20 percent, with at least 95 percent of those responses rated as "Excellent." Jeremy

Hemingway is the only driver on Beat 24, running on I-780 from I-80 to I-680, and on I-680 from I-780 to Marshview Road, including Sunday service. This is an important area for FSP services because, according to Karl Offerman, manager, "It ties the 680 and 780 gaps. Now motorists can drive all the way to Davis on freeways covered by FSP."



Jeremy Hemingway, Roadrunner Tow

Contractor of the Quarter

Roadrunner Tow is the Contractor of the Second Quarter of 2008 because of their excellent service in Solano County with Beats 24 and 29. Combined, these two beats cover I-680, I-780 and I-80 from the Carquinez and Benicia bridges all the way to Fairfield. For this period, the three trucks on Beats 24 and 29 recorded assist rates of 1.56 and 1.78 assists per truck per hour. Karl Offerman, the FSP manager for Roadrunner, credits their success to "working hard at keeping our numbers up, and working for the best fuel economy." Faced with rising fuel and tow costs, Offerman is especially praiseworthy of his drivers who squeeze out extra mileage and work from their trucks. Drivers on these beats maintain a level of professionalism and quality of service which results in an excellent tow operation and high praise from the motoring public.





Karl Offerman, FSP Manager, Roadrunner Tow


The Public Speaks

Motorists continue to mail, e-mail and phone in praise and gratitude for their experiences with the FSP program. Here are a few recent comments.


VoiceMail

 (3/17/08) I was in an accident on Highway 29 on February 25 and I wanted to compliment the young man that came to my rescue. I so appreciate this wonderful service. The FSP driver calmed me down and let me know that everything was going to be okay. I just felt so safe with him being there. Unfortunately, I don't remember his name, but I just wanted to say thank you so very much.


 (5/10/08) This is Mark from Pleasanton, CA. I just wanted to say what a great job you guys are doing. My wife and three-year-old son were in the car when they had a flat tire the other day. Your guys stopped and changed the flat tire for them. I did not even know that this service was available, but I sure am glad to see my tax dollars going towards something that great, like this service. Thank you very much.


 (5/28/08) This is George, I broke down in Concord and I did not know about your service. The driver who came and assisted me was pleasant and courteous. I did not know about this program, but I think it is wonderful. Thank you very much.


E-mail

 (4/8/08) I would like to take this time to thank you for the FSP. I was on my way home from work in Palo Alto and forgot to gas up before I left. I made it to just before Auto Mall on I-880 North before I ran out of gas. As I was pulling over to the emergency lane, one of your tow trucks came up behind me and gave me a gallon of gas. This was enough gas to get to the gas station off Auto Mall. The driver was very polite and did a great job of getting me back on the road. Who knows how long I would have sat there waiting for someone to get off work to

come and help. I am very thankful for the quick and very helpful response from driver Mike Nunes of All Ways Tow & Transport. Thanks again!!

 (4/16/08) This is Officer D.M. Whedbee. I work for the CHP out of the Hayward Area Office, and I work with FSP driver Justin Parker of Palace Garage on a daily basis and he is one of the best drivers out there. He is ALWAYS quick, effective and safe. He frequently takes care of problems that arise without even calling CHP for assistance. His professional attitude and demeanor make him a pleasure to work with.

 (9/9/08) I never knew about this service before my tire blew out on the freeway today. What a fabulous surprise. The guy from FSP was professional, helpful, and speedy — basically, a lifesaver. Thank you, thank you, thank you! The driver, Herman Garcia of Nelson's Towing, deserves praise.

 (9/11/08) Hello, I wanted to say thank you for this service! I am so grateful that Moises Reyes came to the rescue when I was stranded by a flat tire on the side of the San Mateo Bridge. When unexpected things like this occur you are caught unprepared and virtually at a loss on what to do. Moises made me feel safe and taken care of during a moment of "what do I do now?" He was so professional, speedy and made the whole experience 200 percent more bearable!! Thank you, Moises, for coming to the rescue! You're the best!



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